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Agenda item 4 (a)

DRAFT REPORT

Rapporteur: Mrs. Sharon BRENNEN-HAYLOCK (Bahamas)

Addendum

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999 (item 4 (a))

Section 28. Internal oversight

1. At its 17th meeting, on 20 June 1997, the Committee considered section 28, Internal oversight, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. The section was introduced by the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services, who explained that the proposed increase in resources was largely deferred growth from 1996-1997 and that the Office was still new and adjusting to growing demands.

Discussion

2. Many delegations expressed full support for the role of the Office and the tasks entrusted to it. Those delegations underlined the importance of the mandate of the Office and stressed that the Office had developed into a very useful and indispensable part of the machinery of the Organization. Some delegations felt that the relationship, coordination and cooperation between the Office and other external oversight machineries should have been reflected in the programme of work. Several delegations stressed that the Office did not have the mandate to alter the main programmes of the Organization. Other delegations felt that it was a proper function of the Office to provide support to intergovernmental bodies in that regard. Several delegations objected to the words "by altering their content and, if necessary, reviewing their objectives" in paragraph 28.17.

3. Several delegations welcomed the emphasis given to monitoring and evaluation. Other delegations felt that the relationship between the Office and operational funds and programmes should have been more clearly defined. Several delegations expressed strong objections to the wording of the narrative in paragraph 28.63 of subprogramme 4, Investigations, and proposed that it be modified and carefully reworded.

4. Some delegations expressed concern at the number of gratis personnel under the section and pointed out that their use was incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations.

5. Some delegations questioned the growth proposed for the programme in comparison with other programmes, in particular with respect to resources proposed for equipment and general operating expenses and the need for a separate administrative unit, taking into account that the programme was not a priority of the Organization. Other delegations expressed concern about the progressive increase in resources requested under the section, and that the growth requested had not been fully justified. Those delegations pointed out that while the Office recommended efficiency measures and resource reductions for other programmes and sections, no such proposals were reflected under the section. Those delegations indicated that, in view of the financial difficulties of the Organization, the Office of Internal Oversight Services was expected to identify efficiency gains within the Office and should serve as a model in minimizing its demand for resources. Other delegations fully supported the resources proposed under the section and emphasized the necessity of providing adequate resources for the Office in order to fulfil its functions. Those delegations considered that the resources provided to the Office were more than compensated by significant savings already identified by the Office. A number of delegations noted the disproportionately low level of resources allocated to subprogramme 1, Central evaluation, in comparison to the other subprogrammes of the section. Other delegations considered that the Office should be provided with the resources to fully develop its role and that the expenditure was compensated by the savings achieved.

Conclusions and recommendations

6. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly approval of the programme narrative of section 28, Internal oversight, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, subject to the following modification:

> In paragraph 28.63, the first part of the first sentence should be deleted so that the sentence would read: "The section established an office in Nairobi in 1996".